Bioc 115: General Syllabus and Course Policy

NOTE: this is a generalized syllabus. Individual section syllabi will be uploaded to Owl-Space by or before the first day of classes. Classes begin in the second half of each semester.

Section instructor

Each section will have its own instructor (instructors will be announced prior to the first class).

Course organizers

Dr. Dereth Phillips (derethp@rice.edu) and Dr. Bonnie Bartel (bartel@rice.edu)

Regular meetings: *Attendance at all meetings and tours is required as part of the grade.*

Meeting time and location TBA (check section times)—one meeting/week unless otherwise noted

- **Meeting week 1** Introductions, course overview, background lecture
- **Meeting week 2** Discuss introduction and methods, of article #1.
- **Meeting week 3** Discuss results, discussion, and implications, of article #1.
- **Meeting week 4** Discuss article #2. Prepare for featured lab tour.
- **Meeting week 5** Featured lab tour
- **Meeting week 6** Screening of documentary "Naturally Obsessed"
- **Meeting week 7** Tour of your instructor's lab

Additional requirements outside of the regular class period:

- **Med center tour** a tour of a medical center department may be required depending on host availably
- **Seminar** (Self-schedule based on available seminar times)

Homework: due *midnight* the night before class unless otherwise stated

#1 (Due before meeting 2) Read article #1 (Introduction and Methods sections) and answer written questions.

#2 (Due before meeting 3) Read article #1 (Results and Discussion sections) and answer written questions.

#3 (Due before meeting 4) Read article #2 and answer written questions.

#4 (Due before meeting 5) Review article #1, prepare questions to ask during tour, and visit the featured lab's website

Movie pre-screening (Before meeting 6) Watch the first half of the documentary *Naturally Obsessed* on Owl-Space

#5 (Due in class on last day of class): Seminar Notes form

#6 (Due by or before last day of finals): End-of-Course Survey on-line form

Readings

Article #1: A peer-reviewed research article written at Rice (TBA)

Article #2: A related peer-reviewed research article written elsewhere

Attendance and grading

Attendance is required. To provide the group with a lively discussion, it is critical that you are present at each of the meetings of this course. Should you miss a meeting due to a documented illness or emergency, you will be offered the opportunity to recover some or all of the points by successfully completing an additional reading and homework assignment.

It is important to be on time for all class meetings and activities. Being late will negatively impact your participation grade for that session.

Assuming perfect attendance, your final grade will reflect your performance on written homework assignments (6 assignments) and class participation (8 meetings/tours).

Grading philosophy: The primary goal of Bioc 115 is to introduce freshmen to research biology and biologists in a non-threatening environment in which they can feel comfortable asking questions. To foster an environment conducive to exploration, student work will be evaluated not as correct or incorrect but on the basis of effort, curiosity, and insight. To create a collegial atmosphere, it is important for students to understand that they are sharing in an exploration and not competing against one another in a Darwinian struggle for the rightward tail of the curve. We expect that students who attend all class meetings, positively contribute to every discussion, and put a good-faith effort into every homework assignment will be able to earn an A. This is not an easy A — the homework will be challenging and time-consuming and the readings are difficult — but it is an A that should be attainable by all students who choose to put in the effort. A good-faith effort on the homework requires that students be intellectually engaged in the material and attempt to thoughtfully answer every question. When stumped by a question, students should explain in their answer where they became lost or confused. Incomplete/minimal answers, blank answer fields, or non-answers (e.g., "I don't know") do not indicate significant intellectual effort and will not receive full credit.

Personal electronic equipment use

Students may not make use of any personal electronic equipment during class unless specifically permitted by their instructor. This includes the use of music players, cell phones, computers, game players, etc. In the interest of a lively discussion, is important that students not be distracted by texting, gaming, or web surfing.

Disability accommodations

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the instructor during the first week of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities also will need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.

Honor code for Bioc 115 homework assignments

All homework must be the work of the individual. You are not permitted to work with others on any of the homework assignments with the sole exception of Homework#4. If collaborating on assignment #4, you should list the names of all those with whom you worked.

Citation guidelines for homework answers: When referencing one of the two assigned homework articles it is sufficient to reference the articles as "1stAuthor'sLastName, *et al*.," as your instructor is familiar with these articles. When consulting outside sources in answering your homework questions, you must provide a complete reference (including authors, journal name, year, volume and page number) if the source is published in a journal, or a URL if the source is only available on the web. Any text quoted verbatim from a source must be placed in quotes. Please review the Rice Honor Council policy on plagiarism, a form of academic fraud, which is found at http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/